53. Undesirability of granting to outsiders lands which could be cultivated by natives.

Mr. Dominic Thomman (*Agricultural Association, Changanachery*) referred to Travancore as one of the most thickly populated countries of the world and said that about 2400 square miles or one-third of the whole area of the State had been already set apart as reserved forests. Population was steadily growing and Government would soon find themselves confronted with the problem of finding breathing space for the overflowing millions of the land. The High Ranges covering an area of nearly 1000 square miles had been already given away to tea, coffee and cardamom planters and large tracts of land, in the low-lying districts also, were being granted to Europeans for the cultivation of rubber. He prayed that, as far as possible, lands which could be cultivated by natives should not be given to outsiders and that the simple and just instructions recently issued by Government for regulating the grant of lands for rubber cultivation should be strictly enforced in practice.

Reply.—No general rule can be laid down. Encouragement for special industry should be given wherever needed, consistently with the preservation of the permanent interests of the State.

59. Reclamation of backwater for paddy cultivation.

Mr. G. A. Baker (*Kottayam*) said that in 1903 a notification was published at the instance of the British Government prohibiting all reclamation of the Vembanad backwater on the ground that this would cause the silting up of the Cochin harbour. The poor ryots suffered heavily on account of this prohibition and, unless a portion at least of the backwater were permitted to be reclaimed, it would be difficult to meet the growing demands of the people of this State. An investigation should also be held as to whether and how far such reclamation would really affect the Cochin harbour.

Mr. Dominic Thomman (*Agricultural Association, Changanachery*) *and Mr. K. N. Kesava Pillai* (*Quilon*) supported Mr. Baker's views.

Mr. M. Narayana Panicker (*Ampalapuzha*) observed that the southern and eastern portions of the Vembanad backwater could be easily reclaimed and as the yield of the punja fields was becoming poorer and poorer, the ryots in the Northern taluks had been long turn-

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ing their attention to the reclamation of this backwater as the sole available means of subsistence left for them. Before 1903, more than 50,000 parahs of land had been so reclaimed. He thought that the conversion of the southern corner of the backwater into wet land would in no way prejudicially affect the Cochin harbour situated at its northern extremity and, even if on enquiry it turned out that it did really affect that harbour, arrangements could be made to remove the accumulation of silt every year by means of dredgers and the cost thereof recovered from the ryots concerned. He prayed that this aspect of the question might receive the kind attention of the authorities concerned and all possible relief afforded to the suffering ryots of North Travancore as early as practicable.

Reply.—The matter will receive the serious and sympathetic consideration of Government.

60. Reduction of interest on agricultural loans to 3 per cent.

Mr. G. Sankaranarayana Iyer and Mr. Sattanathan Karayalan (Shencottah) observed that the interest charged on agricultural loans by Government was 4 per cent. at present and it would be desirable to reduce it to 3 per cent.

Reply.—This will receive consideration.

61. Establishment of an Agricultural Board.

Mr. K. S. Shanmukham Pillai (Agricultural Improvement Association, South Travancore) prayed for the establishment of an agricultural board for the benefit of the ryots.

Reply.—This will be considered.

62. Desirability of holding Agricultural Exhibitions in all the Divisions.

Mr. S. Krishna Pillai (Tiruvalla) requested the attention of Government to this subject.

Reply.—This has been already sanctioned. Agricultural exhibitions will be held in all the Divisions.

63. Opening of Agricultural Demonstration Farms.

Mr. Padmanabha Pillai (Eraniel) suggested that a model agricultural farm might be attached to the Eraniel School.

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